

MARINE SAFETY MANUAL

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CHAPTER 14: STAFF AND RADIO OFFICERS

A. Certificates Of Registry As Staff Officers.

1. Statutory Authority.

The authority for the issuance of certificates of registry is in 46 U.S.C. 7101. Statutory qualifications for certificates of registry are in 46 U.S.C. 7102, 7104, 7105, 7107, 7108 and 7109.

2. General.

The statutes allow only certificates of registry to be issued for pursers, medical doctors (formerly surgeons) and professional nurses. The regulations specify various grades of purser. There are no grades for medical doctor or professional nurse.

3. Ratings.

The holder of a certificate of registry may apply to have a rating endorsed on the certificate. The only ratings currently allowed are: marine physician assistant and hospital corpsman.

a. Marine Physician Assistant.

To qualify for an endorsement as marine physician assistant, an applicant must successfully complete an accredited course of instruction for a physician's assistant or a nurse practitioner program. Physician's assistant courses must be approved by the American Medical Society or the National Commission on Certification of Physician's Assistants. When answering inquiries from the public, it is important to understand that the marine physician assistant rating only means the holder has met the Coast Guard's requirements for that rating. It does not necessarily mean that the holder meets the requirements of any other federal, state, or local agency for physician assistants.

b. Hospital Corpsman.

The requirements for this rating are fully explained by 46 CFR 10.809(b).

c. Pharmacist's Mate.

Original endorsements as pharmacist's mate are no longer issued. The holder of a pharmacist's mate rating may renew it or convert it to a hospital corpsman rating.

4. Justifying The Need For Certificates Of Registry.

46 CFR 10.805 requires that applicants present a letter justifying the need for the certificate of registry. This applies to all applicants, both civilian and military. It also applies to all original certificates of registry regardless of the grade of the certificate. The wording of the regulation is vague and does not prohibit the applicant from writing the letter. Regardless of the source of the letter, OCMI's must be satisfied that there is a real need for the certificate of registry. Note that staff officers are only required to be registered if they serve on Great Lakes vessels (other than those ferrying passengers and cars) and ocean vessels. (46 U.S.C. 8302)

5. Expiration.

46 U.S.C. 7107 requires certificates of registry be issued for five-year periods with the understanding that radio officers must keep their FCC license valid for their license or document to be valid.

6. Currency Of State Licenses For Medical Doctors And Registered Nurses.

For a certificate as medical doctor or professional nurse to remain valid, 46 U.S.C. 7107 requires the holder to keep the state license as medical doctor or registered nurse current. This is the holder's responsibility. There is no need for the expiration date of a certificate of registry to coincide with the expiration date of a state license. The state license must, however, be current when the certificate of registry is renewed.

7. Requirement For Merchant Mariner's Document.

Note that 46 CFR 10.805(b) requires applicants to hold or apply for a merchant mariner's document

8. Temporary Permits.

No temporary letter authorizing employment as a staff officer may be issued without the approval of Commanding Officer, NMC.

B. Licenses For Radio Officers.

1. Statutory Authority.

The authority to grant licenses as radio officer is 46 U.S.C. 7101. Statutory requirements for licenses as radio officer are found in 46 U.S.C. 7103.

2. Application Procedure.

In addition to meeting the standard requirements for all licenses, Regional Examination Centers (RECs) will review the application including all supporting documentation and interview the applicant.

Note: A National Agency check is no longer required to be submitted in the application procedure.

3. Application Approval.

The material listed below must be sent to Commanding Officer, NMC.

a. Form CG-719B.

License And Renewal Application (original).

b. Form FD-258.

Applicant Fingerprint Forms (2).

c. Radiotelegraph Operator License.

Copy (REC should sight original) of applicant's current Federal Communications Commission (FCC) first or second class radiotelegraph operator's certificate.

d. GMDSS Operator Certificate.

Copy (REC should sight original) of applicant's current Federal Communications Commission (FCC) GMDSS operator's certificate. This copy is required only when applying for STCW certification or endorsement for GMDSS radio operator. (See 46 CFR 10.205(n).)

e. GMDSS Course Completion Certificate.

Copy (REC should sight original) of applicant's completion certificate of a Coast Guard approved course for operator of radio in the GMDSS. This copy is required only when applying for STCW certification or endorsement for GMDSS radio operator.

f. Form CG-2765.

U.S. Coast Guard Intelligence Agency Check Request Form is now obsolete and the Intelligence Agency Check is no longer required for radio officers.

4. Currency Of FCC Licenses.

For a radio officer license to remain valid, 46 U.S.C. 7106, and the wording on the license itself, require the holder to keep the FCC license current. This is the holder's responsibility. There is no need for the expiration date of a radio officer license to coincide with the expiration date of the FCC license. The FCC license must, however, be current when the radio officer license is renewed.

5. Merchant Mariner's Documents (MMDs) For Radio Officers.

Radio officers should be encouraged to apply for MMDs when they receive their licenses. An MMD is required to serve on most vessels that are required to carry a radio officer. Refer to chapter 15 for information on issuing MMDs to radio officers.

